

**STATEMENT**  
**Senator Pete V. Domenici**  
**May 1, 2000**

Mr. President, today I'm introducing legislation, the Nuclear Weapons Complex Conversion Act of 2000, to dramatically improve our programs that deal with non-proliferation risks associated with the Former Soviet Union. My legislation will also significantly enhance our ability to consider future arms control agreements.

Today, we face challenges involving the warheads, materials, and expertise developed during the days of the Cold War. With that War behind us, arguably the greatest global security challenge involves containment and management of proliferation threats – many of which are in danger of being fueled with former Soviet capabilities.

Congress has repeatedly demonstrated frustration with the Administration's progress in this key area. A significant part of this concern arises from today's wide range of uncoordinated programs, all dealing with non-proliferation issues. Programs aren't integrated into one coherent thrust led by a focused and committed Administration. Our non-proliferation programs resemble a patchwork quilt designed and executed by several artists.

The net effect of our non-proliferation programs is far less than it could be and needs to be. These programs are begging for coherent oversight and inter-agency cooperation. To address this need, which is far from new, the 1996 Nunn-Lugar-Domenici legislation called for appointment of a high-level non-proliferation czar.

This Administration never acted on this law. Without this coordination, inter-agency turf fights remain unresolved, potential synergies aren't exploited, and redundancy and inefficiency can run rampant. My legislation therefore expresses a Sense of Congress that the time is long overdue for this coordination.

My legislation also deals specifically with the largest unmet challenges of the former Soviet Russian nuclear weapons complex. That complex contains three main challenges: weapons production capacity, materials for those weapons, and people.

Programs associated with the materials, where goals and progress are easier to define and measure, are demonstrating credible progress. But, the other areas present more complex challenges.

The “brain drain” issue reflects a concern that scientists and engineers with critical knowledge might sell their knowledge to rogue states. The weapons production issue raises concern about Russia’s ability to rapidly reconstitute forces that could invalidate future arms control agreements. These twin issues then, non-proliferation and the credibility of future arms control agreements, urgently need improved approaches.

We already have a Nuclear Cities Initiative within the Department of Energy, but it has barely begun to scratch the surface in dealing with the problem of their cash-strapped and over-sized nuclear complex. To date, NCI has not garnered enough Congressional support to have stable and realistic funding, largely because it hasn’t set goals and milestones against which progress can be documented and measured.

The concerns on weapon production capabilities highlight very large asymmetries. The U.S. has significantly reduced the size of our nuclear weapons production complex. These reductions were accomplished openly, and are transparent to Russia. Russia, in contrast, has barely started to downsize its complex. Their complex is still sized at Cold War levels.

Little information about the Russian complex is shared, and ten of its most sensitive cities remain closed. Although the Russian Federal Ministry of Atomic Energy has announced its intent to significantly downsize its workforce, it has been slow in accomplishing this goal and any progress is very closely held.

The current Nuclear Cities Initiative was established to assist Russia in creating job opportunities for employees who are not required to support realistic Russian security requirements and to facilitate conversion of the production facilities. It has focused on creation of commercial ventures that provide self-sustaining jobs, primarily in three of the closed cities. The current program scope, progress, and funding are not consistent with the scale of the threats to us.

I want to significantly advance our progress in the nuclear cities. However, to gain sufficient advocacy for a major funding increase, the program must demonstrate rapid progress in downsizing and an ability for the U.S. to track

progress against verifiable milestones that support a Russian complex consistent with their future national security requirements.

My legislation substantially increases the funding and scope of our programs with the Russian nuclear weapons complex to assist the Russian Federation in restructuring its complex, but does this conditioned on a commitment from the Russian Federation to measure progress against realistic, transparent milestones. Without their commitment, and without an ability to track progress against such milestones, it is simply not appropriate for us to continue to fund programs within their complex.

My legislation supports the ongoing commercialization programs in their complex. In addition, however, it authorizes the federal government to contract for research in support of U.S. agencies in cases where the Russians have unique capabilities and facilities.

My legislation demands that funding for this expanded program, for the 2002 fiscal year and beyond, be contingent on making significant measurable progress on key issues of strategic interest to both countries, including:

- ! Demonstrable conversion from military to civilian activities at the four cities participating in the FY 2001 program.

- ! Development of a ten year plan by the Russian Federation for a nuclear weapons complex downsized to reflect the changing national security needs of Russia. This plan should reflect a production capacity consistent with future arms control agreements.

- ! Increased transparency of Russian production capacity and nuclear materials inventories to eventually match that of the United States.

In addition, my legislation authorizes funding for educational initiatives both in the U.S. and in the Former Soviet Union focused on developing new non-proliferation experts. There are now few people who can assist in these difficult downsizing processes while, at the same time, minimizing the threat presented by residual weapons material or expertise.

Significant cooperation from the Russian government must occur for milestones to be set and met. That won't happen unless they concur that these steps are also in their best interests. From interactions with senior levels of their Ministry of Atomic Energy, I've learned that they share the view that progress in this area is in the best interests of both nations.

It is certainly in our mutual interests to accomplish the transition of both nation's nuclear weapons complexes with as much care and as little proliferation risk as possible. It is also in each nation's interests for the other to maintain a sufficiently credible complex to support realistic national security objectives. To the extent that we can take these steps in a mutually transparent way, we should be able to assure each other of our future intentions.

Mr. President, this legislation can significantly impact our non-proliferation and future arms control national security objectives.